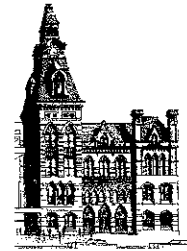




**CITY OF NEW HAVEN
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John DeStefano, Jr.
Mayor

**Testimony of the City of New Haven
to the Finance Committee**

Regarding

**S.B. No. 25 AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE
FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER PURPOSES**

Submitted by
City of New Haven
March 12, 2012

Senator Daily, Rep. Widlitz, and members of the Finance Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon SB 25 the annual bonding bill. The City of New Haven recognizes the difficult this task has of balancing the needs of the State in crafting the annual bonding plan. Section 33 of the bill would authorize \$10,000,000 for the Department of Social Services to make grants-in-aid for neighborhood facilities, we ask for an additional \$250,000 specifically for the planning of such a facility in New Haven.

The Neighborhood Facilities program is a great program of the state that provides capital assistance for neighborhood facilities such as elderly centers, human resource centers and multi-purpose community centers.

The City of New Haven lacks such a multi-purpose comprehensive community center, and there is a great need for such a comprehensive center in the City, especially to help enhance the delivery of youth services. The community in New Haven has galvanized around this need for enhanced youth services and a number of groups of active citizens have emerged including The Concerned Citizens for the Greater New Haven Dixwell Community Q House, Reclaiming Our Community Coalition and a youth organization the New Elm City Dream.

Through a community engagement process the City seeks to partner with these active citizens, supporters of a community center and most importantly – youth to move this concept to a plan for the development of such a comprehensive facility. The group would help to determine the needs of the community including what services such a facility should offer. The group would help determine the most suitable location form options. And complete the schematic plans for the facility. The City has committed \$250,000 in its Capitol budget and asks the State to match that commitment.

The City faces many challenges in completing this plan and selecting a location for a facility. Many of the buildings that could potentially be re-used for such a purpose – including the Goffe Street Armory – present numerous environmental concerns. The planning dollars will enable the City to complete environmental reviews, schematic renderings and complete facility plans to make a shovel ready community center project to meet the needs of our youth.

Thank you for your consideration.

NEW HAVEN IT ALL HAPPENS HERE